

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 INR-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-07 PRS-01 IO-13 SSO-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 L-03 /067 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4225

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4527

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KS, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT.

REF: SEOUL 4496

1. ON ORDERS FROM PRESIDENT PARK, PRESIDENTAIL PROTOCOL SECRETARY CHOE KWAN-SOO CALLED ME IN ON MAY 31 TO REQUEST CLARIFICATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MAY 26 PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT PRESIDENT PARK HAD ADVOCATED GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL IN PAST.

2. CHOE SAID THAT PRESIDENT PARK AND KOREAN GOVERNMENT VIEWED WITH SERIOUSNESS THESE COMMENTS SINCE PRESIDENT PARK'S VIEWS AND POSITION ON GROUND FORCES WITHDRAWAL WERE PUBLICLY ON RECORD AS WELL AS TRANSMITTED TO US PRIVATELY, MOST RECENTLY DURING MEETINGS WITH UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND GENERAL BROWN. IN MOST RECENT MEETING PRESIDENT PARK MADE CLEAR IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED TO US PRESENCE, ALTHOUGH ACCEPTING GROUND FORCES WITHDRAWAL.

3. CHOE SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT COULD LEAD TO DOUBTS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE KOREA ABOUT PRESIDENT PARK'S TRUE POSITION. MANY KOREAN FRIENDS IN ASIA, WHO HAVE SUPPORTED PRESENCE OF US GROUND FORCES, WOULD QUESTION
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CREDIBILITY OF PRESIDENT PARK UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. CHOE URGED VERY EARLY OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC CLARIFICATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARKS WITH APPROPRIATE CONFIRMATION TO ROKG.

4. I TOLD CHOE THAT I HAD ALREADY ALERTED WASHINGTON TO CONCERNS ABOUT REMARKS (REFTEL), BUT WOULD TRANSMIT KOREAN

GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS AGAIN. I POINTED OUT THAT IN PAST
PRESIDENT PARK HIMSELF HAS SAID THAT KOREAN FORCES AFTER
COMPLETION OF FORCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN COULD DEFEND AGAINST
NORTH KOREA ALONE WITH US GROUND FORCES NON-INVOLVEMENT.
HE RESPONDED THAT THIS DID NOT IMPLY ANY ADVOCACY OF
WITHDRAWAL SINCE PRESIDENT PARK HAD ALSO URGED AMERICAN FORCES
BE KEPT HERE AS COUNTER BALANCE TO SOVIETS AND CHINESE, AND AS
DETERRENT.

5. RECOMMENDATION: I WOULD HOPE THAT APPROPRIATE CLARIFICATION
MIGHT BE MADE AS THIS ISSUE COULD BE MAGNIFIED TO MAJOR DIS-
AGREEMENT BETWEEN US AND ROK.
SNEIDER

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